

DRAFT -- Dr. Fletcher's opening remarks at Forum on Speculative
Technology, St. Simon's Island, May 5, 1972

This Forum represents an experiment for NASA, collecting a group
such as yourselves, to attempt;

- o to come to grips, in a few days, with defining what are
likely to be future problems in the area of information
transfer;
- o and at the same time bringing your expertise to focus and
stimulate possible approaches to solving these problems.

Some may feel in these times, when science and technology are under
sharp criticism that a meeting such as this is out of place. Quite the
contrary, for I hope that in the course of the next few days, we may
all experience a better understanding of but a few of the challenges facing
us as an agency and as a Nation with which we will have an interactive
and problem solving role in the next generation. I think it is very evident
that many of us here today may be less personally involved in the month-
to-month solution of these future problems, but I do feel that we need to
explore and pass on the benefits of our own experience to help in defining
the guideposts which the younger members might look to in the future as
points of departure for their own speculative imaginations.

(1) Innovation - what Ken
for success "Ken's ideas"
(2) Examples (personal)
(3) Cross-fertilization of ideas
between different disciplines
test.

I mentioned earlier that this forum is in a way an experiment for NASA.

We should all approach it as an experiment with the attitudes of openness

usually associated with experiments. To my knowledge we have not brought

together such a wide spectrum of people in such a small group before. Nor

have we set out to gather a group together for the sole purpose of speculating,

though we ourselves, and most of you, are involved in this type of activity,

but usually within the confines of our respective specialities.

I understand that we have a number of people here who are futurists, or

forecasters of future technology and its impact on man. I am sure all of you

will agree individually we tend to speculate in a very personal way. Psychologists

may tell us that there are certain methodologies which can be classified as

creativity or speculation. However, I think everyone will agree that one of

the very first elements is to relax and try to disassociate your mental attitudes

from the pressures of the day-to-day, work-a-day world. I wish you best at

this forum.

I cannot encourage you enough to treat it as a forum, particularly some of

you younger people who have an obligation both to yourselves and to the rest

of us to have your ideas aired. Our proceedings will be most informal and

I personally look forward to participating in the discussions which will follow.

GFPezdirtz 5/1/72